

RIVERWAYS

January 30 , 2004

News Notes #9

from the Massachusetts Riverways Programs

Adopt-A-Stream Technical Assistance Awards: Services for River Protection

Dear River Advocates,

As many of you have experienced, **Adopt-A-Stream** is one of Riverways' chief outreach programs. The program is a mainstay of Riverways because it serves rivers and river constituents statewide on all river issues (see <http://www.state.ma.us/dfwele/river/newsnotessept03.htm>). Partnering with watershed associations, conservation commissions, municipal officials, and other community groups, Adopt-A-Stream has jointly established more than 100 Stream Teams and supported Stream Teams in collecting baseline data through Shoreline Surveys on rivers of local concern. With our collective support, Stream Teams have involved municipal officials, created local Action Plans, reported water quality problems, sponsored clean ups, planted buffers, created trails and provided paddler access points. We are continually impressed -- and sometimes amazed -- at what Stream Teams have accomplished for the rivers and streams of Massachusetts in terms of successful projects, fostering community partnerships, and educating communities. Stream Team work is done with volunteer power and very limited financial resources. Riverways is always looking for ways to support their work.

In a time of fiscal constraints, Adopt-A-Stream continues to innovate ways to support Stream Team projects. One of these is the **Riverways Adopt-A-Stream Technical Assistance Awards**. (see <http://www.state.ma.us/dfwele/river/technicalassistance.htm>) The Adopt-A-Stream and Riverways Technical Assistance staff offers a new service to Stream Teams by "granting" Riverways technical assistance staff time to specific Stream Team projects selected through a competitive process. As Adopt-A-Stream continues its usual support to Stream Teams, these Technical Assistance awards will allow the full Riverways staff to give more intense support to a few specially selected projects. This Riverways **NewsNotes** describes the process of selection as well as providing some examples of the type of projects suitable for the Technical Assistance Awards. Riverways looks forward to working with Stream Teams in this intensified effort.

The following article provides several good illustrations about how citizen volunteer concern for

local rivers and streams is channeled and focused through Adopt-A-Stream to produce tangible environmental and other public benefits.

For those of you who are not currently involved with a Stream Team and are interested in working on these projects, please consider joining an existing Stream Team or forming a new one! Information can be found on the web at http://www.state.ma.us/dfwele/river/rivAAS_toc.htm.

Our very best wishes to all of you for a good New Year-2004!

See you on the rivers - (skating, perhaps!)

Joan Kimball

P.S.: If you would like to receive these NewsNotes emailed to you directly, please let us know. Also note that all previous NewsNotes are available on-line as well. Highlight articles of past NewsNotes include: Assessing Dams for Environmental Risks, River Continuity, River Instream Flow Stewards (RIFLS), Fishway Stewardship, Nonpoint Source projects and River Restore's Neponset Project.



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Adopt-A-Stream Technical Assistance Awards: Services for River Protection

The Massachusetts Riverways Adopt-A-Stream Program is excited to announce a new opportunity for Stream Teams to partner with Riverways technical staff on projects that work toward river protection. This new process, **Adopt-A-Stream Technical Assistance Awards**, will respond to technical assistance needs of Stream Teams and work with those teams to build capacity, complete projects identified in their Action Plan and create opportunities for river protection and recreation. Adopt-A-Stream is soliciting project ideas from our partner groups for direct support by staff members. Recently, we have been assisting groups with project planning and grant writing, developing new protocols for photo-documentation and coordinating canoe launching sites with the state Public Access Board.

We will solicit project ideas in the form of a letter of inquiry on an ongoing basis with quarterly deadlines for the upcoming season. Staff will work with teams at any time to develop a project

strategy or concept. We hope that this more formalized process will provide our staff and our partner groups with a clear outline for establishing project priorities and for securing the necessary permission (e.g. might be needed from landowners) and local support. Please feel free to call one of the staff with your project ideas. We are offering this service on a rolling basis and applications are due **Tuesday, February 17th** for spring projects. Please see application instructions at <http://www.state.ma.us/dfwele/river/technicalassistance.htm> or contact Riverways if you have any questions or need additional information.

The following illustrations of how the Adopt-A-Stream Program has worked more intensely with Stream Teams, to move forward and complete projects, are offered as examples of projects that are eligible for technical assistance awards (but feel free to propose your own ideas):

Grant Writing Assistance

Riparian buffers along Four Mile Brook in Northfield

The Four Mile Brook Watershed Association (FMBWA) is working to install a riparian buffer to raise awareness about the functions and values of buffers and to encourage other property owners to install buffers on their own property. Adopt-A-Stream and Riverways staff assisted the group in identifying grant opportunities and a list of appropriate native species that could be planted to provide the needs for the area. In May 2003, Adopt-A-Stream and the Four Mile Brook Watershed Association (FMBWA) sponsored a Shoreline Survey of Four Mile Brook and Fisher Brook. After completing the survey, volunteers noted the replanting of riparian buffers as a key priority along the brook, especially in areas that had been previously flooded. They noted several locations where buffers would provide additional wildlife habitat, stabilize the bank and prevent erosion. FMBWA has worked in collaboration with the Town of Northfield to choose a visible location for the buffer installation, allowing residents to easily observe the progress of buffer planting and examples of plants that could be used.

In addition, Adopt-A-Stream provided examples of outreach brochures and assisted in preparing the grant application. Partnering with the Connecticut River Watershed Council, FMBWA applied for a grant to install the buffer and develop a brochure to be distributed to watershed residents. Adopt-A-Stream also provided technical guidance and support to FMBWA to submit a request for assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Services interdisciplinary team to conduct a watershed assessment.

Grant Writing Assistance

Assessing Invasive Species at the Alewife Reservation in Cambridge

The Friends of Alewife Reservation have completed assessments of both the flora and fauna of the Alewife Reservation and are now interested in looking at the impact of invasive species on plant communities. Adopt-A-Stream helped the group to develop a grant proposal for assessing non-native invasive species in the reservation, with a look towards work that will be completed on the Cambridge sewer separation and constructed wetland project. Adopt-A-Stream will be continuing to work with this group on monitoring and participating in the work that will be taking place in the Alewife Reservation by the City of Cambridge.

Working with the Public Access Board in Middleton

Public access to our rivers and lakes provides important opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of our rivers, creating new and lasting advocates. In June 2001 the Middleton Stream Team dedicated a new public access site along the Ipswich River located on town owned land, which has since been extensively used for launching boats and picnicking. When the team expressed interest in building another site downstream, Adopt-A-Stream staff arranged for a representative of the Middleton Stream Team to meet with an engineer from the Public Access Board (PAB) for a site visit of the potential new canoe launch. PAB is an agency of the Department of Fish and Game, which works to enable people who fish and use recreational boats, canoes and kayaks to access the waterways of Massachusetts. Access at this second site opens up the opportunity for a 4-5 mile canoe on the Ipswich River from the Route 114 site down to this new Peabody Street site. The Stream Team secured funding to build the canoe landing and make site improvements themselves. Because both sites meet Public Access Board requirements, PAB would be willing to enter into a management agreement to take care of long term maintenance at the site if the town would agree to basic day to day maintenance of the sites.

PAB is available to meet with Stream Teams to discuss possible new sites. If the site meets PAB requirements (land must be publicly owned, site must have safe access into and out of water, site must provide space for adequate parking (usually 4-6 cars), and there must be a managing authority to maintain the site (usually town or state agency)), PAB will arrange design engineering and contract and oversee the construction and long term repair of the site. Such projects allow for a Stream Team to dedicate its limited time and funding to other priority projects, while still accomplishing an important project for the community and river. If your Stream Team is interested in developing access in your community and would like to arrange a time to meet with a PAB engineer to discuss options for potential canoe launch or fishing sites, please contact either the Adopt-A-Stream Program (617-626-1549), or the Public Access Board (617-727-1843). *For more on the Middleton Stream Team's canoe launch see the Fall 2002 Stream Advocate* (<http://www.state.ma.us/dfwele/river/PDF/rivadvocateF02.pdf>).

Developing new surveys to document river conditions along the Millers River

Adopt-A-Stream Program staff has been working with the Otter River and Tully River Stream Teams through the Athol Bird and Nature Club (ABNC) to train volunteers and coordinate efforts for new Photodocumentation and Bioinventory Surveys. Among the key issues identified in the Action Plans from their 2000 Shoreline Surveys was the lack of specific information on river conditions including habitat areas and species documentation. Following the Survey and Action Planning meetings, the Athol Bird and Nature Club received two Riverways Programs Small Grants for their ongoing work with the Stream Teams. One grant funded the *Photodocumentation Pilot Project* to monitor and assess changes along the Tully River and the Otter River. Volunteers, including Stream Team members, are part of an ongoing process stemming from this grant to document river sections annually using digital photographs, resulting in site-specific information that will show changes over time. The second grant funded the *Bioinventories and Enhancing River Access Project* along the mainstem of the Millers River, the

Otter River and the Tully River. Teams of volunteers perform in-stream inventories of dragonflies, damselflies and other insects as well as invasive plant species from canoes.

Adopt-A-Stream and Riverways Technical Assistance staff have worked closely with ABNC and the Stream Teams throughout the grant period and beyond to outline a timeline, coordinate efforts, develop new datasheets, and to provide guidance and resources on developing survey protocols. This includes helping them to create a sampling plan and quality assurance project plan (QAPP), training volunteers and performing site visits to identify specific locations for the work. The information resulting from this work will be used to build a catalog of changing conditions and habitat areas along the river.

Working with local communities for Wild & Scenic Designation in the Taunton River

As part of the Wild and Scenic Study on the Taunton River, the Study Committee (representatives from the study area towns, nonprofits, state and federal agencies) wanted to look beyond the mainstem and include the major tributaries. After hearing a proposal about how the Adopt-A-Stream Shoreline Survey could be used to help study the tributaries and build a local constituency for the river, the Study Committee voted unanimously to use the Adopt-A-Stream Survey process. A data sheet was added to specifically help surveyors identify resources on the tributaries that had been identified as “outstandingly remarkable” on the mainstem.

Working with local partners and Wild and Scenic staff, Adopt-A-Stream started six Stream Teams, five of which are on tributary streams, and one on the mainstem of the river in Somerset. The Stream Teams were organized by Wild and Scenic staff and were led by local steering committees. Each Stream Team conducted a Shoreline Survey of their sections. Adopt-A-Stream provided training and technical assistance to each group as well as facilitation for the development of each group’s action plan and report. More surveys in the lower watershed are being planned for the spring. Because the tributary surveys are being done during the Wild & Scenic Study, participants can see not only local resources and problems, but also the interconnections between tributaries and the mainstem. In addition, the Surveys bring people together around local river and environmental issues as well as create more awareness about the Wild and Scenic Study. Study Committee members were able to join the Surveys and participate “in the field” as well as “at the table”. Results will be highlighted in the Taunton Wild & Scenic River study and management plan and will play a key role in determining possible designation as a Wild & Scenic River.

In addition to the above examples, Riverways has several programs, such as River Instream Flow Stewards (RIFLS), River Continuity, the River Restore Program and our technical staff, that are able to partner with groups on projects.

RIFLS- Responding to flow concerns across Massachusetts

Responding to increasing concern about unnaturally low stream flow conditions proliferating throughout the Commonwealth, the *River Instream Flow Stewards* (RIFLS) program is training

River Continuity- Evaluating Fish and Wildlife Passage at Culverts and Bridges

As part of the *River Continuity* pilot project, Stream Team volunteers in the Westfield, Chicopee and Millers Watersheds have been identifying road crossings along streams and rivers that block or inhibit fish and wildlife passage. After a short training with Adopt-A-Stream staff, volunteers work in groups to assess culverts and bridges for sufficient water depth, substrate, and appropriate flow velocity. Working with Riverways' River Restore staff, Adopt-A-Stream will help volunteers develop Action Plans, prioritize problem crossings and plan potential remediation. Through a partnership with UMass Extension, River Continuity aims to reduce adverse impacts of road crossings on fish and wildlife movement. The program is currently looking for Stream Teams interested in working on River Continuity surveys. Please contact the Adopt-A-Stream Program [(617) 626-1549 or rachel.calabro@state.ma.us] if your group is interested in learning more about the program.

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<http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/river/newsnotesjan04.htm> (6 of 10)7/15/2005 1:34:54 PM

The EPA recently updated the on-line version of its **Catalog of Federal Funding Sources for Watershed Protection** (<http://cfpub.epa.gov/fedfund>). Use the “search” function to identify one or more of the 84 federal funding sources available to help fund various watershed related projects that pertain to your funding need(s).

The **Clean Water Fund**, **Clean Water Network**, and **Campaign for Safe and Affordable Drinking Water** have formed the **Community Source Water Protection Initiative** (Initiative) to help communities around the country make real water quality protection gains using Source Water Assessments and the tools available through the Safe Drinking Water Act, Clean Water Act, and other federal and state programs. The Initiative is calling on community, public health, consumer, watershed protection and other citizen groups at the state and local level to mobilize local citizens to protect the rivers, streams, wetlands, and groundwater that are the sources of our drinking water. As part of this project, a **source water protection assistance fund** is available to reimburse participants for activities they carry out in concert with the Initiative’s national strategy for turning Source Water Assessments into real water quality gains. The Initiative will reimburse state and local organizations for costs (up to **\$2,000**) associated with local and regional source water protection activities. These activities may include education and dissemination of information to Initiative partner groups and the planning and implementation of source water protection projects. See <http://www.protectsourcewater.org/pdf/fund-guidelines.doc> for application procedures or contact Mike Davis at mdavis@cleanwater.org for more information.

On January 6th, 2003, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced it is seeking proposals for over \$7 million in private lands conservation funding available through the **Private Stewardship Grants Program**. This program provides matching grants to groups and individuals on a competitive basis to support voluntary conservation practices on private lands for the benefit of federally-listed threatened and endangered species. Efforts that benefit proposed, candidate, and other “at risk” species also qualify. In FY 2003, this program awarded 113 grants totaling more than \$9.4 million to groups and individuals for conservation projects on private lands in 43 states. For more information on the Private Stewardship Grants Program or to learn how to apply for FY 2004 funding, please visit the Service’s Endangered Species Program website (<http://endangered.fws.gov>).

The **Five-Star Restoration Matching Grants Program** provides financial assistance for community-based wetland, riparian, and coastal habitat restoration projects that foster local natural resource stewardship through education, outreach, and training. Projects must involve diverse partnerships of ideally five organizations that contribute funding, land, technical assistance, workforce support, and/or other in-kind services. Awards are between \$5,000 and \$20,000, with an average of \$10,000. The program is sponsored by the National Association of Counties, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Wildlife Habitat Council, in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Community-Based Restoration Program within NOAA Fisheries, and others. Applications must be postmarked by

March 1. For details, see <http://www.nfwf.org/programs/5star-rfp.htm>.

ON-LINE RESOURCES

American Heritage Rivers' (AHR) Services Web Page

<http://www.epa.gov/rivers/services>

Although you probably know that two river systems in Massachusetts (the **Connecticut** and the **Blackstone**) are federally-designated American Heritage Rivers, one of AHR's missions is to provide services to **all** rivers and river groups regardless of designation. The EPA's AHR services web page provides an enormous wealth of resources available to help communities working for rivers. You can search the available resources by categories of assistance, such as financial assistance and guides, or by topic, such as historic preservation, economic revitalization, or natural resource protection.

EPA 2003 Water Quality Trading Policy: Questions and Answers

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/trading/policyfaq.html>

This recently posted on-line document provides a detailed explanation of EPA's water quality trading initiative, in which alternative and/or innovative approaches that are more effective than conventional measures in achieving tangible, cost-effective improvements in the water quality of impaired waterways are encouraged (for a more basic description of the water quality trading concept, see <http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/trading/tradingfaq.html>). A pilot water quality trading project is currently underway in the **Charles** watershed, determining the feasibility of whether improving recharge of clean water into the ground and eventually in the river, thereby increasing its capacity to assimilate pollutants, may be more cost-effective than expensive upgrades at wastewater treatment plants in improving the Charles' water quality (see "Grant backs EPA's water 'trading'" article at <http://www.crwa.org/articles/articles.html>).

MassWildlife's Angler Education Program (AEP)

<http://www.state.ma.us/dfwele/dfw/dfweduc.htm#AEP>

MassWildlife's Angler Education Program's mission is to foster public appreciation and understanding of our aquatic resources through family fishing festivals, basic freshwater fishing classes, freshwater fishing clinics and basic ice fishing clinics. Volunteer instructors, in AEP teams across the state, teach people of all ages about fish, fishing and the value of aquatic resources. The program's main goal is to stimulate public interest in our aquatic outdoors through participation in sport fishing. Currently there are ten teams in the state, but more are needed. Areas of need include Cape Cod, the southeastern part of the state, and the upper Connecticut River Valley. Established volunteer teams in particular need of assistance are located in the Gardner, Rehoboth, and the North Shore area. To become a volunteer instructor, a person must apply and either apprentice within an existing group, or attend an instructor workshop. For more information and an Instructor Application form, contact AEP coordinator Jim Lagacy at (508) 792-7270 x109 or Jim.Lagacy@state.ma.us.

RiverSmart

<http://www.riversmart.org>

A project of **River Network**, the **RiverSmart** campaign is designed to help everyone incorporate more river-friendly practices into their daily lives. This website can help you learn to be RiverSmart about the things you do at home, so you can make a real difference in the quality of our rivers and the water we drink. Use this site to make a commitment, to download tips, take the RiverSmart quiz, sign up for the RiverSmart Newsletter, find a watershed group in your area and much more. The "Find a Local Group" feature provides access to an immense (but somewhat dated) list of organizations active in water resources. Groups should check this page to see if the posted information is accurate or to add your group to it.

The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) Water Resources Links Page

http://www.thetrustees.org/pages/235_water_resources.cfm

This web page provides an extensive listing of lake/pond, river and watershed associations as well as other organizations and agencies active in water resources in Massachusetts. Groups should check this page to see if the posted information is accurate or to add your group to it (click on "Links" at the top of the page for instructions). TTOR's links page provides on-line connections to a wide variety of other outdoor-focused organizations and activities.

Third Sector New England (TSNE)

<http://www.tsne.org/section/6.html>

TSNE provides information and services to build the knowledge, power, and effectiveness of nonprofit organizations (i.e., the third sector, government and business being the other two) that engage people in community and public life. We act also to promote wider recognition of community-based organizations as the primary stewards of our core societal values. TSNE's web page provides access to consulting services, capacity-building grants and fiscal sponsor services for small unincorporated organizations as well as online versions of its *Third Sector News* newsletter.

Trails and Greenways Clearinghouse

<http://www.trailsandgreenways.org/>

A project of the **Rails-to-Trails Conservancy** (RTC), the Clearinghouse provides technical assistance, information resources and referrals to trail and greenway advocates and developers across the nation. Services are free and available to individuals, government agencies, communities, grassroots organizations and anyone else who is seeking to create or manage trails and greenways. For more information, contact RTC's New England representative Craig Della Penna [(508) 755-3300, rtccraig@transact.org].

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